*267. [*The Questioners (Shri Pramod Mahajan and Shri Ashwani Kumar were absent. For answers* vide *Col* 34 *infra*].

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Proposal to convert the Railways into an autonomous/Public Sector company

*266. SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR:

SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a proposal under Government's consideration to convert the Railways into an autonomous body or pubiic sector company;

(b) whether it is also a fact that such a proposal is likely to make the operations of the Railways commercially viable and efficient:

(c) if so, the details in this regard; and

(d) whether any study has been conducted on the said proposal and if so, the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

(d) The proposal to convert the Railways into an autonomous body or public sector company was examined by the Railway Reforms Committee. They recommended that Railways should continue to function as a Department of the Central Government.

Setting up of Consumer Protection Forums

*267. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN:

SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR:

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) what is the State-wise break-up of the District Consumer Protection Forums and State level Commissions established and working effectively so far;

(b) the details of Government's New Action Plan for consumers protection if any, to activate the District Forums and State Commissions in all the districts and States, respectively; and

(c) whether any of the Government services have been exempted from the purview of the Act; if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI NATHU RAM MIRDHA): (a) According to information available with Central Government, the redressal agencies under the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 have been started and functioning in 15 States/UTs namely Andhra Pradesh (State Commission and 23 District Forums), Bihar (State Commission and I District Forum), Gujarat (State Commission and 3 District Forums), Goa (1 District Forum), Haryana (State Commission and 2 District Forums), Himachal Pradesh (1 District Forums), Maharashtra (State Commission and 1 District Forum), Orissa (State Commission and 13 District Forums), Rajasthan (State Commission and 6 District Forums), Uttar Pradesh (State Commission and 12 District Forums), West Bengal (State Commission and 3 District Forums), Andaman & Nicobar Islands (2 District Forums), Chandigarh (State Commission and 1 District Forums), Delhi (State Commission and 1 District Forum) and Pondicherry (State Commission and 1 District Forum).

(b) The Central Government is coordinating and pursuing the implementation of the Consumer Protection Act in all

States/Uts. 12 States/TUs have notified the redressal machinery and approval of the Central Government has been conveyed to the remaining four States. These Commissions/Forums are expected to start functioning soon.

(c) At present, no Government service has been exempted from the purview of the Act.

Implementation of Bachhawat Wage Award in the UNI

*268. SHRI V. GOPALSAMY:

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the UNI Employees' Federation has recently represented to Government about the faulty and partial implementation of the Bachhawat Wage Award by the Management of the UNI;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what action has been taken by Government for the proper implementation of the Bachhawat Wage Award by the Management of the UNI?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND WELFARE (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) and (b) A representation from the United News of India (UNI) has been received on 20th March, 1990 alongwith copy of a letter of October 16, 1989 which was jointly signed by the Management and the Employees' Union of UNI and a copy of the Memorandum of Settlement reached between the management and the employees of UNI. The representation seeks certain clarifications on the demands of the Workers' Union:

(c) The Government have asked all States/Union Territories to enforce the Bachhawat Wage Board recommendations and to ensure their proper implementation in all newspaper establishments and news agencies.

Drought-hit areas in the country

*269. SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the areas and the districts in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and elsewhere in the country hit by drought last year;

(b) whether any request for central assistance for providing drought relief in these areas have been made by the respective State Governments; and

(c) if so, what is Government's response for extending drought relief to these States?

THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI DEVI LAL): (a) Only the Governments of Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh reported damage due to drought conditions in some parts of their States due to inadequate rains during South-West Monsoon period of 1989 and sought central assistance. The number of villages and districts affected by drought conditions, as reported by these States is as under:—

Sl. No.	State	Number of Affected	
		Villages	Districts
1	Jammu & Kashmir	Not reported	12
2	Madhya Pradesh .	8114	16
3	Rajasthan . .	13907	25
4	Uttar Pradesh .	34723	27

(b) and (c) Governments of Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh submitted memoranda seeking central assistance for drought relief. A ceiling of expenditure of Rs. 6.24 crore to Jammu & Kashmir, Rs. 18.17 crore to Madhya Pradesh, Rs. 16.77 crore to Rajasthan and Rs. 14.55 crore to Uttar Pradesh has been approved.